

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

news release

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## COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT WILL GIVE CITIZENS MORE INFORMATION ON FISH AND WILDLIFE

Commercial fishermen, private industry, and other marine resource users should be able to get more information about fish and wildlife now that a new cooperative agreement has been signed between the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

The purpose of the agreement, signed in December by FWS Director Lynn A. Greenwalt and NOAA Administrator Richard A. Frank, is to bring together the resources of NOAA marine advisory programs and the technical expertise of the Fish and Wildlife Service. Under the agreement, the two agencies will cooperate in areas of mutual interest such as preparing educational and research programs and disseminating the information to the public.

The Marine Advisory Service, which provides information on marine fishery resources, will now also distribute FWS information on inland fisheries, including such subjects as fish nutrition, disease, and hatchery production. In addition, the Marine Advisory Service will be an outlet for general information on fish and wildlife such as migratory bird hunting regulations.

The agreement is part of an effort to make fish and wildlife information more available to landowners and land and water resource users through NOAA's Marine Advisory Service and Federal extension education programs.

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These programs are administered by NOAA's Office of Sea Grant and the Department of Agriculture's Extension Service and are conducted through State land and sea grant universities. The Fish and Wildlife Service signed a similar cooperative agreement with the Extension Service last summer and also established an FWS Office of Extension Education to encourage further cooperation among the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Marine Advisory Service, and the Extension Service.

The move toward greater cooperation among the three Federal agencies is not new, however. The Fish and Wildlife Service has been active in working with the Extension Service for more than 40 years, and there has been considerable cooperation between the Marine Advisory Service and the Extension Service ever since the former was created in 1966.

The establishment of the agreement between the FWS and NOAA is of much interest to those concerned with America's water resources. For the first time there will be a formal working arrangement to transmit information between experts in the Fish and Wildlife Service and their counterparts in land and sea grant universities in the 50 States--including 8,000 counties--and Puerto Rico, Guam, the Virgin Islands, and the District of Columbia. The result is expected to benefit private citizens as well as the Nation's fish and wildlife.

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This release is being issued simultaneously by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.